Access to RTI for rural people

3326. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ordinary common people do not have an easy/smooth access to information under RTI Act as per a study conducted by the society of participatory research in Asia;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government officials refusing to accept application under the RTI Act and also provide vague and insufficient information to the rural people; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) and (b) According to a study conducted by the Society of Participatory Reserach in Asia NGO, in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, the rural masses have largely not been able to use the RTI Act due to poor awareness.

(c) and (d) The Right to Information Act contains adequate provisions for remedial action in case there is violation of provisions of that Act. Any complaint of refusal to accept applications under the RTI Act by any officer can be dealt with accordingly.

Review of poverty estimate process

3327. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether many Chief Ministers in the National Development Council meeting voiced concern over the process of poverty estimates in the country;

(b) if so, whether the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission has assured that the matter was already under consideration under the Group headed by the Economists which would submit report shortly;

(c) if so, whether Government has received the report from the Expert Group; and

(d) if so, the steps that are being considered for implementing the suggestions made by the Expert Group?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) In the 54th meeting of the National Development Council held on 19th December, 2007, Chief Ministers of some States mentioned about the differences between the official estimates of poverty made by the Planning Commission and the number of poor identified by the State Governments.

(b) The Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission stated that this issue is currently under consideration by an Expert Group under Prof. Suresh Tendulkar, the Chairman of the National Statistical Commission and that the Expert Group is expected to submit a report shortly.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.